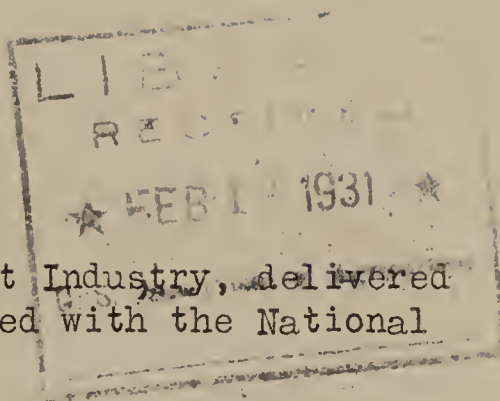


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THE GARDEN CALENDAR



A radio talk by W. R. Beattie, Bureau of Plant Industry, delivered through Station WRC and 39 other stations associated with the National Broadcasting Company, February 10, 1931.

How-do-you-do Friends. Without appearing inquisitive I'd like to know what you had, or are having for dinner today. Not that it really is any of my business but I'm interested to know what proportion of the meal, and of the 1090 odd other meals, for the past year, you produced on your own farm - assuming that you are a farmer and your farm a genuine food factory. I do know that the farmers who live best are those who produce the greater part of their living on their own farms. Many of us failed to produce a supply of good fruits and vegetables last season on account of the drought, but a lot of us failed simply because we didn't try hard enough.

On two occasions during the past week, I sat as a member of our local county Red Cross relief committee, and carefully considered a large number of applications for relief. Several of the applicants were farm owners, others were farm renters. In practically every case there was the notation, "no food on hand," and, as a rule a large grocery bill. Without doubt the drought is responsible for the sad plight of some of these people, while in other cases the difficulty is traceable to neglect and failure on their part to provide for growing the major portion of their living at home.

If any of you, who are seated around your dinner tables today do not have a plentiful supply of fruits and vegetables of your own growing it is high time that you were thinking about making a more determined effort to produce your supply the coming season. I would like to touch, briefly, upon a few of the more important points to consider in the preparation, planting and care of a garden that will produce plenty of vegetables for a family of say 5 or 6 persons.

First, the matter of soil and location of the garden. It is a waste of time and energy to plant a garden on poor land, and if the present location of the garden is not on good ground then either change the location or improve the soil. There are few farms that can not supply enough stable or barn-lot manure with which to thoroughly fertilize a one-half acre garden, and that is the size of garden I would recommend for most farms. Haul the manure, preferably well rotted material, and spread it on the garden at the earliest opportunity when the soil is not too wet to drive upon. Even a wheelbarrow will injure the soil if it is wet. As soon as the ground is in condition to plow turn under the manure. Unless the soil of the garden is especially good use commercial fertilizers in addition to the manure before planting the crops or as side dressings after the crops have started.

Second, thoroughly prepare the soil before planting garden crops. Have the garden so arranged that you can plow it with a team or tractor

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then use the disk and smoothing harrow until the soil is fine and mellow as deep as plowed. If you did a good job of plowing this will mean a bed of fine soil 7 to 11 inches deep or deeper. Thorough preparation will insure better stands of plants and less work in cultivating the crops.

Third, start the garden early. Sow the seeds of tomatoes, peppers, eggplant, cabbage and lettuce in the house or in a hotbed and have the plants well started by the time it is safe to set them in the garden. Garden vegetables may be roughly divided into three classes as regards hardiness. The earliest group which may be planted before all danger of frost is past include onion seed and sets, peas, radishes, beets, lettuce, spinach, mustard, kale, cabbage plants, and early white potatoes. The second, or slightly less hardy group includes carrots, sweet corn, snap beans, and the little Carolina Sieva or Henderson bush bean. This group are killed by frost but the seeds may often be planted four or five days before the last frosts are liable to occur. Next comes the tender group including the plants of tomato, pepper and eggplant and the seeding of Lima beans, melons, squashes and cucumbers. By the time you have completed planting the tender crops it will be in order to begin making second plantings of snap beans and sweet corn also something to provide greens during the early part of the summer.

Fourth, cultivate the garden right from the start and don't let the weeds get a start. Have a definite time each week for working the garden, and you men who are within the sound of my voice today, for shame don't expect the women folks to do the greater part of the garden work. It's all right for them to do a little of the lighter work, mainly for outdoor exercise and relief from their household duties, but not the burden of the care of the garden. Arrange the garden in long rows so that most of the crops may be cultivated with a horse and about one hour a week will be sufficient for this cultivation, then if you will keep a good sharp hoe hanging on the back porch you can often do a little hoeing evenings after supper or perhaps in the morning while you are waiting to be called to breakfast, the evening, however, is the better time of the two for hoeing in the garden.

Fifth, keep right on making repeat plantings of certain crops, especially beans and sweet corn. You can often get three crops from a piece of land during the season if you will plant another kind of crop immediately an earlier crop is removed. That is what is called succession cropping. Companion cropping can occasionally be worked, for example late cabbage or late sweet corn can be planted between the rows of early potatoes, then as the potatoes are dug the soil can be leveled around the corn or cabbage and a week or two gained in that way. You folks in the south are already using early vegetables from your gardens and there is nothing to prevent your having others follow on the same land. Keep the land working and don't let it grow a crop of weeds during midsummer.

Sixth, protect your garden from insects. No matter how good the soil or how thoroughly you plant and cultivate, if you do not control cabbage worms, cutworms, Mexican bean beetle, potato beetles, leaf hoppers, plant lice and all the hungry horde of insects you will have little in the way

of products from your garden. Keep a supply of poisons and materials with which to mix them, on hand but stored in a safe place, ready for use at a moments notice. Farmers' Bulletin No. 1371 on the Diseases and Insects of Garden Vegetables may be a help to you in time of need but it may be too late to send and get a copy after the real need occurs so better get your copy now.

Really folks, I am thinking you are tired of hearing me talk about this matter of a food garden on the farm this summer, but I believe that more "living at home and boarding at the same place" is vital to the welfare of not only our farm families but to many others who are in position to supplement their meager income by cultivating a garden. I am very much in earnest and trust that you are at least getting a little touch of gardening fever.

